

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-46. (canceled)

47. (new) An apparatus for making bags of varying sizes from thermoplastic material for packaging products of irregular size in a moving product stream, comprising means for machine assessing and acquiring information on one or more characteristics of size of products in the moving product stream, wherein the means for machine assessing and acquiring information comprises a remote sensing means; a first film source for supplying thermoplastic film in the form of a lay-flat film tube of a first width; a second film source for supplying thermoplastic film in the form of a lay-flat film tube of a second width; a printer; heat sealing means for making bags from the film sources by heat sealing across one or the other of the film sources near the end of the respective lay-flat film tube to form each bag; control means arranged to select one of the film sources based on the acquired size information related to each product, and to cause a bag to be made for each product to a length selected based on the acquired size information related to each product; and a printer shuttle which enables the printer to move to the selected lay-flat film tube.

48. (new) The apparatus according to claim 47 wherein the means for machine assessing and acquiring information on one or more characteristics of size of products in the moving product stream comprises a machine vision system.

49. (new) The apparatus according to claim 47 wherein the apparatus is arranged to produce a thermoplastic bag for a product arriving on a product conveying means, after removal of a previous thermoplastic bag.

50. (new) The apparatus according to claim 47 wherein:
the means for machine assessing and acquiring information on one or more characteristics of size of products in the moving product stream comprises a

vision system for assessing the size of meat cuts passing the vision system on the conveying means,

the first film source and the second film source comprise rolls of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube of a first width and a second width respectively, provided at a packing station which also includes heat sealing and cutting means for making bags by heat sealing and cutting across film from the film rolls to form bags; and

the control means is arranged to cause a bag to be made for each meat cut approaching the packing station from a selected one of the film rolls of a first width and a second width respectively, and to cause the bag to be made to a length based on size information from the vision system relating to the approaching meat cut, and to cause the bag to be presented for use in packing the meat cut, after a previous bag used for packing a previous meat cut has been removed.

51. (new) The apparatus according to claim 47 which comprises a means for cutting the respective lay-flat film tube.

52. (new) An apparatus for making bags of varying sizes from thermoplastic material for packaging products of irregular size in a moving product stream, comprising means for machine assessing and acquiring information on one or more characteristics of size of products in the moving product stream, wherein the means for machine assessing and acquiring information comprises a remote sensing means; a first film source for supplying thermoplastic film in the form of a lay-flat film tube of a first width; a second film source for supplying thermoplastic film in the form of a lay-flat film tube of a second width; a printer; heat sealing means for making bags from the film sources by heat sealing across one or the other of the film sources near the end of the respective lay-flat film tube to form each bag; control means arranged to select one of the film sources based on the acquired size information related to each product, and to cause a bag to be made for each product to a length selected based on the acquired size information related to each product; and a means for moving film from the first or second film source to the printer.

53. (new) The apparatus according to claim 52 wherein the means for machine assessing and acquiring information on one or more characteristics of size of products in the moving product stream comprises a machine vision system.

54. (new) The apparatus according to claim 52 wherein the apparatus is arranged to produce a thermoplastic bag for a product arriving on a product conveying means, after removal of a previous thermoplastic bag.

55. (new) The apparatus according to claim 52 wherein:

the means for machine assessing and acquiring information on one or more characteristics of size of products in the moving product stream comprises a vision system for assessing the size of meat cuts passing the vision system on the conveying means,

the first film source and the second film source comprise rolls of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube of a first width and a second width respectively, provided at a packing station which also includes heat sealing and cutting means for making bags by heat sealing and cutting across film from the film rolls to form bags; and

the control means is arranged to cause a bag to be made for each meat cut approaching the packing station from a selected one of the film rolls of a first width and a second width respectively, and to cause the bag to be made to a length based on size information from the vision system relating to the approaching meat cut, and to cause the bag to be presented for use in packing the meat cut, after a previous bag used for packing a previous meat cut has been removed.

56. (new) The apparatus according to claim 52 which comprises a means for cutting the respective lay-flat film tube.

57. (new) An apparatus for making bags of varying sizes from thermoplastic material for packaging meat cuts of irregular size in a moving product stream, comprising a machine vision system for assessing the size of meat cuts passing the vision system on a convey-

ing means, wherein the machine vision system comprises a remote sensing means; a first film source for supplying thermoplastic film in the form of a lay-flat film tube of a first width; a second film source for supplying thermoplastic film in the form of a lay-flat film tube of a second width; a printer; heat sealing means for making bags from the film sources by heat sealing across one or the other of the film sources near the end of the respective lay-flat film tube to form each bag; and control means arranged to select one of the film sources based on the acquired size information related to each meat cut, and to cause a bag to be made for each meat cut to a length selected based on the acquired size information related to each meat cut;

wherein the apparatus is arranged to produce a thermoplastic bag for a meat cut arriving on a product conveying means, after removal of a previous thermoplastic bag; and

wherein the apparatus comprises either a printer shuttle which enables the printer to move to the selected lay-flat film tube, or a means for moving film from the first or second film source to the printer.

58. (new) A method of making bags for packing meat cuts comprising:

- a) remotely machine assessing at least one characteristic indicative of the size of individual meat cuts in a series of meat cuts in a moving product stream;
- b) automatedly making a bag for each meat cut by selecting via a control means and based on the acquired size information related to each meat cut, one of at least a first source or second film source of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube of different widths;
- c) moving the film of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube from the selected film source to a printer;
- d) printing the film of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube; and
- e) sealing and cutting a length of the selected lay-flat thermoplastic film tube based on the acquired size information related to each meat cut, to cause a bag to be made for each meat cut.

59. (new) A method of making bags for packing meat cuts comprising:

- a) remotely machine assessing at least one characteristic indicative of the size of individual meat cuts in a series of meat cuts in a moving product stream;
- b) automatedly making a bag for each meat cut by selecting via a control means and based on the acquired size information related to each meat cut, one of at least a first source or second film source of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube of different widths;
- c) providing a printer;
- d) moving a printer shuttle means to the selected film source of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube;
- e) printing the film of lay-flat thermoplastic film tube; and
- f) sealing and cutting a length of the selected lay-flat thermoplastic film tube based on the acquired size information related to each meat cut, to cause a bag to be made for each meat cut.